

Observations on the DEAE MATRES.

AMONG the unknown Gods which seem to have been introduced at Rome, or worshiped in her provinces, and occur in inscriptions in the later periods of her empire, the *Deae Matres* have given no small trouble to Antiquaries.

THE first who took notice of them I believe was Spon, who in his *Miscellanea Eruditae Antiquitatis*, p. 105, takes them for “*deified women*, who, while living, were thought to have the gift “*of prophecy* :” such as are mentioned by Caesar [a], and Tacitus [b]; and such seem to have been among the Britons at that time [c]. Keyser, in a dissertation on this subject [d], is of the same opinion.

PROFESSOR Ward, in Horsley’s *Britannia Romana*, p. 201; adds, “*after their death they seem to have been worshiped as a sort* “*of Genii, or tutelar deities of the places where they resided,* “*&c.*” Mr. Horsley observes, that Caesar calls these women *Matres familias*.

Now it appears to me, that our learned Professor mistook the sense of Tacitus, who says of these women, that the Germans *venerati sunt eas nec adulatione nec tanquam facerent deas*; which is just the contrary of deification, and implies a veneration between human respect and divine worship. So that these prophet-

[a] B. G. I. 40.

[b] De morib. Germ. c. 8.

[c] Tacitus, Ann. xiv. c. 32.

[d] In his Antiq. Sept. p. 479.

esses have not the least claim to the rank of *Deae Matres*; nor will Keysser's interpretation of *facere deas*, as if it meant making deities whose divinity the very worshippers doubted of, at all avail.

MENETRIER, in his *Histoire du ville de Lyons*, fol. 1696, p. 128, supposed them Goddesses of Fecundity, or Generation, or the *Parcae* [e] whose name Varro derives à *partu*. Menetrier, to make his etymology uniform, would fetch *Augustae*, a title often given them, *ab augendo*, and supposes the fruits, *paterae*, &c. sometimes put into their hands, to be emblems of their profession. But this is all as trifling [f] as his reading MAT. AVG. in the singular number, and rendering it *la sainte mere*, when by his own rule it should be *la seconde mere*.

CHORIER, in his *Recherches sur les Antiquites de Vienne*, p. 135, seems to have formed the best conjecture about these deities; “that about the time of Pertinax and Severus, a notion prevailed among the Romans, that each province, emperor, or particular person, was under the patronage of certain Nymphs, to whom they gave the name of *Matres*, or, as they, by a barbarous pronunciation, called it, *Matrae*. But these deities having been introduced from the villages, retained the names given them by the country people; whence we find in Inscriptions *Matribus Gallaicis* [g], *Dis Matribus*, *Matribus Augustis*, &c. Those supposed to protect the emperor and his house were called *Matres Augustae*, *Meres des Augustes*.”

To this opinion of Chorier Dr. Ward seems to incline, in explaining another inscription in Horsley, page 222, Northumb.

[e] This last was also the opinion of Bochart.

[f] It is adopted by the author of *la Religion des Gaulois*, and confuted by Abbé Banier.

[g] This seems corrupted for *Gallia*, which occurs on an inscription found in Spain, given by Montfaucon, II. II. 5. 5. Horsley, p. 275. Banier and Keysser, p. 436, read of *Gallicia* in Spain, inhabited anciently by the Gallaici.

XLVIII, XLIX, at least that they were local deities. Thus in an inscription found on the Rhine, the Matres *Vaptbiae*, whoever they were, are joined with the *Genius loci* [b].

DR. Gale, in his Commentary on Antoninus's Itinerary, p. 7, 8, treats them as local deities, introduced here from Germany.

THAT they were the deities of barbarous nations is plain both from the additional names given them, and from the people who dedicated the altars to them [i]. Thus two altars in Horsley, Scotl. xxix. p. 205, Northumb. xlii. p. 220, and a third given to them, p. 298 [k], are dedicated by the cohort of the Tungri. It is to these people we are probably indebted for the introduction of these deities among us; the inscriptions to their honour in Germany being found along the banks of the Rhine, which was the northern boundary of their territory. A cohort of them came over before the time of M. Aurelius, and continued here till the latest period of the empire [l].

OF the seven inscriptions in Menetrier three or four are dedicated by foreigners; the others by Romans. All these want the epithet *Deae*. Three in Horsley have it [m]. Five in Menetrier have *Augustis*, the other two *Matronis Aufanis* and *Aufaniabus* (which two epithets are undoubtedly the same) and *Matribus Pannoniorum* and *Delmatarum* [n]. Perhaps *Matris*, in four of these, is an abbreviation of *Matronis*, the stroke above being overlooked; and then we avoid the imputation of barbarism.

[b] Keyser, p. 435.

[i] See Horsley, p. 275.

[k] Also in Burton's Antoninus, p. 49. and Gale's Antoninus, p. 7.

[l] See Horsley, p. 89.

[m] Cumb. LI. Durh. II. xxviii.

[n] *Delmatarum* for *Dalmatarum* occurs in Horsl. Cumb. LIV, LV.

THE *Campestres* are joined with the *Alatervae* in Horsley [o]. In Spon de Diis Ignotis they accompany the *Sulevae*. In this last mentioned author [p] we have an inscription, *Matris Gerudatibus* [q], found near Gironne in Spain; also others *Vediantibus*, *Mopantibus*, and *Gabiabus*. The first of these three found at Nice in Provence belongs to the *Vediantii*, an Alpine nation; the second at Nimeguen passes the skill even of Keyfler to explain; the last is on a stone found near Cologne, and is also given to Juno [r]. Menetrier derives *Aufania* from the German *Offen*, q. d. *Court*; as if they were deities of the emperor's household: Keyfler, much more probably, from two northern words, *fan* god, and *ave* a valley. The *Gallaicae* belong to Spain; the *Trivirae* to Triers; the *Vacallinebae* to Vachlendorf; the *Brittae* on two stones in Cannigeter de Brittenburgo, p. 21, are, by Dr. Stukeley [s], referred to Britain. *Matronis Rumaehabus* in Gruter, p. xci, which Dr. Gale [t] would make to belong to *Rumabo*, a place in Scotland mentioned only by Ravennas, may be a mere transposition of *Romanebis*, or *Rumanebis*, in Gruter p. xc, which Keyfler [u] and Banier assign to Rumanheim in the dutchy of Juliers.

THESE, and many other instances that might be adduced, at the same time that they prove these Matres to be local deities, protectresses of certain towns or villages, demonstrate them to have been objects of devotion to the Gauls and Germans, from whom they passed into Britain; where, on two inscriptions they are expressly

[o] Scot. xxviii. [p] Gerunda is in Spain, Cellarius I. p. 117. Antoninus places *Gerulata* in Pannonia; perhaps we should read *Gerudata*, or *Geruda*.

[q] Misc. Er. Ant. lxxvi.

[r] Keyfler, p. 416, has plainly shewn that *Junones* were the *Genii* of women.

[s] Hist. of Carauf. I. p. 268.

[t] Comment. in Anton. p. 8.

[u] *Romanebis*, *Rumaehabus*, or *Rumaenabus*, N being easily mistaken for H; and many inscriptions in Gruter have been less correctly copied.

styled *Transmarinae* [w]. Keyser, from the authority of *Mairabus* in two inscriptions, which certainly is a mistake for *Matrabus*, if not for *Matribus*, gives them a Celtic or Scandinavian etymology; and thence immediately concludes in favour of the prophetesses. It is somewhat remarkable that of the thirty inscriptions erected to the honour of these deities in different parts of Europe, Britain has the next greatest number to France, where there are fourteen. We have nine, and Germany has six. The *Matronae* are plainly distinguished from the *Matres* on the inscription at Lyons, erected to both by Pompeianus [x].

THE Abbé Banier [y], who inclines a little to the notion of their being deified women, finds the origin of these goddesses in Crete; whence they were brought by Meriones, the companion of Idomeneus at the Trojan war, to Enguia, a city of Sicily, built by his countrymen under Minos. According to Diodorus Siculus [z], who enters more into their history, they were the nymphs that nursed Jupiter, and in return for their good office were translated into the stars that form the Great Bear. He proceeds to relate the great veneration they were held in, and the expensive offerings made at their superb temple. This seems to have been mistaken by Cicero [a] for the temple of *Magna Mater*. In honour of these *Matres* we have two Greek inscriptions, Νίκη Μάτρων, and Ἀρηι, Μάτρωνι και Διοσκουριαις [b]; whereby it should seem they were

[w] Horst. Cumb. li. p. 274, 298.

[x] Keyser, Antiq. Septent. p. 394 407. [y] Mythologie, V. p. 507.

[z] L. iv. p. 194. ed. Wesseling.—The three nymphs, whom Theocritus, xii. 44. introduces Hercules invoking on the loss of Hylas, must be *Asiatic* deities, and seem to be only three names invented by the poet. Banier indeed thinks they were *Deae Matres*.

[a] In Verrem, iv. 44. though Keyser, p. 423, justifies his sentiment.

[b] Spon, Miscell. Er. Ant. p. LXXVIII. Banier, ubi sup. Keyser, 423.

military.

military deities; and hence not improbably the same, or joined with the *Sulevae*, whose name may be derived from *συλη*, *spolium*, and so the *Sulevae* and *Campestres* on an inscription at Rome [c], may mean deities of war and peace.

WESSELIUS indeed is for distinguishing the Cretan and Sicilian Matres from those of the continent. And I must confess myself so far of this opinion, as to believe at least that the Matres were not worshiped on the continent by the Romans till about the time assigned by Chorier.

THE Abbé Banier supposes “these to be rural deities, from the “offerings made to them consisting of fruits and flowers; and on “the inscription to the *Sulevae* a hog appears going to be sacrificed, “which was the victim of Bacchus and Ceres.” The same offerings will suit them considered under the notion of Genii; fruits, flowers, milk, and such simple things, being offered to the Genius of Rome, who has, like those goddesses, the cornucopia and patera for libations.

THE Abbé adds, “that the Gauls, who had a particular veneration for these goddesses, erected to them little chapels, called *Cancelli*, as appears by the ancient Capitularies.” Such perhaps was the temple supposed to belong to their images in Northumberland [d], and the three in Menetrier, and that in Keyser [e], which have the niches in which the three figures are seated. Such may have been the vault re-opened at Elenborough, 1769; of which an account was then read to the Society of Antiquaries, and printed in the *Archaeologia*, vol. II. p. 58. in which vault were actually found three figures like the Deae Matres before existing in England.

[c] Spon de Diis ignotis, p. 59. Quære if the *Sulevae* are the same with the *Alatervae*, who accompany the *Campestres* in an inscription in Horsley, Scot. xxix.

[d] Horsley, North. XLVIII. p. 224. [e] P. 394.

*Observations on some Roman Altars, found in August
1771, near Graham's Dyke.*

THE workmen employed to cut the new canal of communication between the Forth and Clyde, digging in August 1771, near one of the most considerable stations on Graham's Dyke, at Auchindavie, had the good fortune to light on four altars of different sizes, with inscriptions on one side of each very legible. They had been thrown into a pit with the iron heads of two large sledge hammers, and the shoulders of a bust of the same materials with the altars, viz. of the grit stone of the county. Whether these hammers had belonged to the proprietor of the altars, or were used to demolish the temple, is uncertain. But as they were all buried together in the same pit and at the same time, they had probably served some purposes about the temple or fort, perhaps for knocking down victims. In the same station was found a gold coin of Trajan, having on one side

IMP. CAES. NERVA TRAIAN. AVG. GERM.

on the other

P. M. TR. P. COSS. III. P. P.

This coin was purchased for 7 guineas for the capital cabinet of foreign and domestic coins belonging to the Faculty of Advocates of Edinburgh.

THE University of Glasgow being possessor of all the Roman inscriptions found upon this wall of Antoninus Pius, with
many

many other from different parts of Scotland, these altars and the fragment of the bust were procured for them by Mr. Anderson, Professor of Natural Philosophy in that University. In his possession I saw and copied them*. The inscriptions are as follow:

1.
I. O. M.
VICTORIAE
VICTRICI PRO SALVT
TE IMPNET·SVA
SVORVM
M COCCEI
FIRMVS
D LEG II AVG

Three feet high.

1. *i. e.* Jovi Optimo Maximo, Victoriae victrici pro salute Imperatorum nostrorum et sua suorum M. Cocceius Firmus Centurio legionis secundae Augustae.

3.
GENIO
TERRAE
BRITA
NNICAE
M·COCCEI
FIRMVS
D LEG II AVG.

Two feet seven inches.

3. *i. e.* Genio terrae Britannicae M. Cocceius Firmus, &c.

2.
MARTI
MINERVAE
CAMPEST
BVSHERO
EPONAE
VICTORIAE
M. COCCEI
FIRMVS
D LEG II AVG

Two feet 7 inches.

2. *i. e.* Marti Minervae eampestribus, heroi Eponae, Victoriae M. Cocceius Firmus Centurio legionis secundae Augustae.

4.
DIANAE
APOLLINI
M·COCCE
FIRMVS
D LEG II AVG.

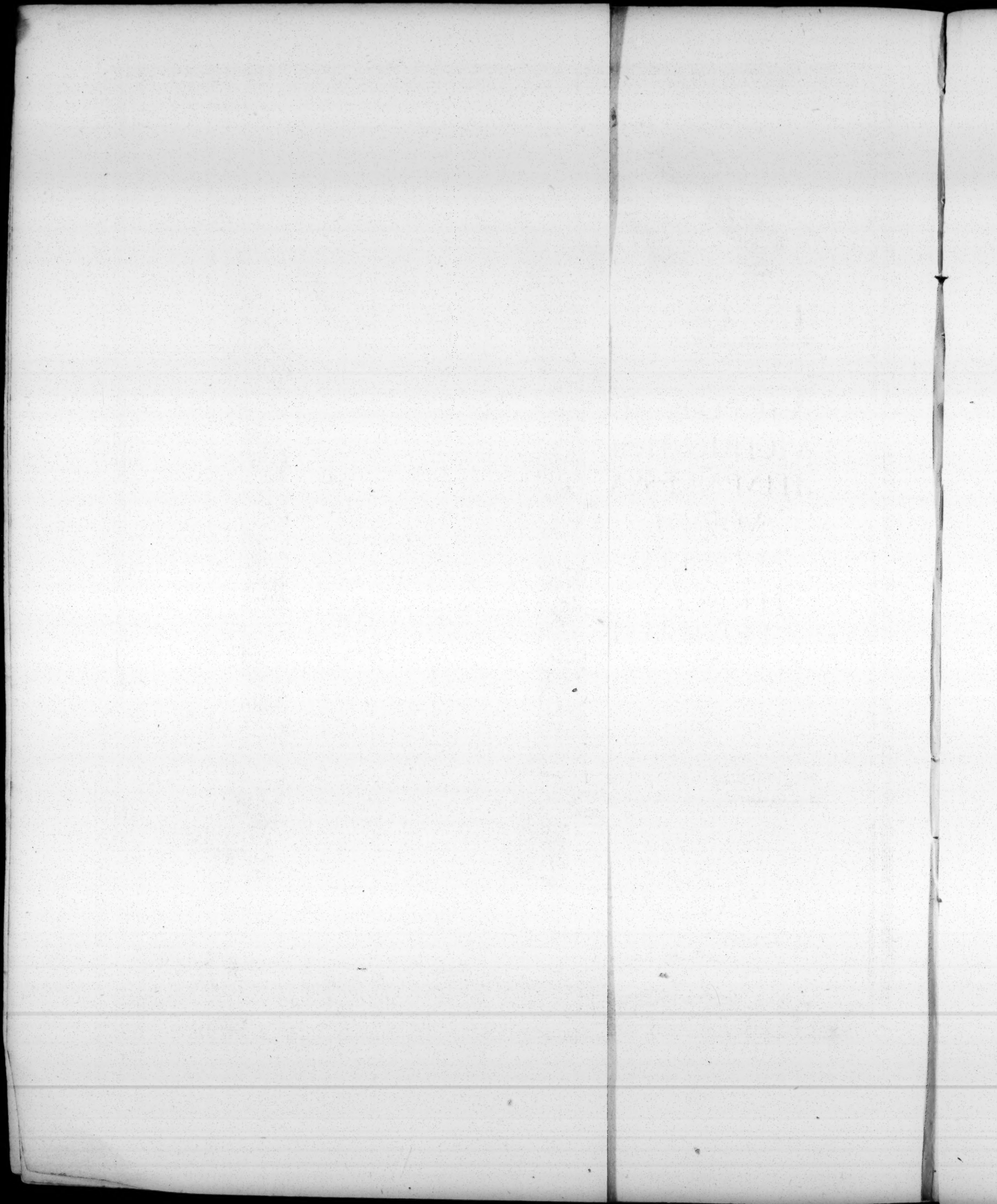
Two feet 4 inches.

4. Dianae [*et*] Apollini M. &c.

THE altars are of three different heights, from three feet to two feet seven inches, extremely narrow in the middle; and the base and capitals only fourteen inches square. Only the largest

* See the plate.





of them has a focus. There is little difference in their form from the generality of Roman altars; but each of them presents us with some peculiarity unknown in the system of Roman inscriptions in Britain. M. Cocceius Firmus is a name entirely new among us; and I apprehend these altars to have been the furniture of his Lararium, or of the public temple of the fort, perhaps erected by him, and which appears to have been dedicated to no less than eight deities. The dedication of the first to Jupiter Optimus Maximus and Victoria Victrix is as unusual as this epithet of victory, who has more frequently some *nomen gentilitium* or *patronymicum*; such as Reipublicae, Augusti, or Augustorum nostrorum. I suppose this seemingly tautological designation therefore expressive of the great obligation the Roman army had to her when the barbarous nations were driven beyond this wall, then made the frontier. The Legio II^{da}, mentioned in all these inscriptions, had the chief hand in erecting this wall [a]. At this time, by the valor of Lollius Urbicus, the barbarians who had the whole country between this and Hadrian's wall at their mercy, were driven back beyond this wall, which continued their boundary for a long time. But the mention of *Imperatores nostri* (two emperors) fixes the date of these inscriptions to the reign of M. Aurelius, successor to Antoninus Pius, who built the wall. Aurelius associated Verus in the empire, and they are styled *Augusti nostri* in a Northumberland inscription [b], and *Caesares nostri* in a Yorkshire one [c]. The omission of *et* between *sua* and *suorum* is probably the fault of the stone-cutter. An inscription in Horsley (Northumb. LIV.) has *pro salute praefecti & sua*; but none have the *Emperor's* health joined with the dedicator's.

[a] See Horsley, p. 162.

[b] Horsl. North. ix. 2.

[c] Horsl. Yorksh. xiii.

THE second inscription is extremely curious. Mars and Minerva are here united, and styled *Campestres*, a title hitherto confined to inferior deities, and if I mistake not, intirely to demigods or genii, such as the *Matres*. Keyser, p. 422, cites an inscription from Schotti *Observ. Humanae*, V. p. 32, *Marti campestri*, which he would correct *Matri campestri*; but our inscription justifies Schottus's transcript.

EPONA, here called a *heroine*, was the goddess of horses; and we have her descent from one F. Stellus and his favourite mare in Agesilaus's *Italica*, cited by Plutarch, or the author of the *Parallela minora*, II. p. 312, Ed. Xyland. We learn from Juvenal [a], and Apuleius [b], that her picture or statue was set up in the middle of the ceiling, or over the racks, gorgeously dressed with fresh garlands, as she had favoured her votaries, or her aid was solicited. She is joined with the *Campestres Deae* or *Matres*, in an inscription found on the Danube, near *Epinaburgum*, or Pinaburg (supposed to take its name from her) thus given by Aventinus, *Annales Boi.* p. 81. ap. Keyser, p. 421.

CAMPES ET
EPONAE ALAI
SATGHER QUIET
AE BASSIANVS
CRRAFF VSLEM.

perhaps to be read (*Matribus*) *Campestribus et Eponae ala sagittariorum cui praeest Quietus Bassianus curavit faciendum, votum solvens lubens merito.*

[a]

——— "jurat

"Solam Eponam et facies olida ad praesepia pictas." Sat. viii. 155.

[b] Respicio pilae mediae quae trabes stabuli sustinebat, in ipso fere meditullio Eponae deae simulachrum residens aediculae, quod accuratè corollis roseis, et quidem recentibus fuerat ornatum. *Metam.* III. p. 5. edit. 1623. See also Vossius de *Idolol.* l. ix. c. 33.

SHE



SHE stands alone on another at Salsach, of the time of Hellogabalus [d]:

DEAE EPONAE MAG.
OPILIVS. RESTIO. MIL.
LEG. XXII. ANTONI
ANAE. P. P. F. IMMV
NIS. COS. CVRA. SA
LIENS. VICO. SALOD.
D. D. XVIII. KAL. SEPTEMB.
IMP. D. N. ANTONINO
AVG. II. ET SACERDO
TE. II. COS.

V. S. L. M.

HER style of *Herois* on our altar is so singular, that I must observe Mr. Professor Anderson, finding the lower stroke of the B imperfect, is for reading the third line RVSHERO, and giving the Britons a new topical deity of the name of *Rusberus*. But if the general tenor of the inscription was not against this reading, the I inclosed in the O is decisive for reading *Heroi*; and we have the authority of Ovid that *Herois* is synonymous with *Heroina*:

“ ———veteres heroidas aequas.”

Amor. II. iv. 33.

Turnebus [e], and the old scholiast on Juvenal, defend *Epona* against *Hippona*, of which it is plainly a corruption, etymology certainly favouring the latter. There is a stroke over the O in this inscription, as if a second N was understood. Victory is joined with the other three deities, as if the success of the Romans here was owing to their cavalry.

[d] Guillemanus de Reb. Helvetior. III. c. 10. § 2. ap. Cellar. Geog. II. p. 4.

[e] Var. Lect. l. xxiv. c. 4.

THE third altar is dedicated to Diana and Apollo, and is the first instance wherein we meet with the former in Britain; and the only one in which the latter occurs, except the inscription to Apollo Grannus, mentioned by Camden, but now lost.

BUT the fourth altar is perhaps the greatest curiosity, and the most interesting to us. *Genio Romae* and *Romano* and *populi Romani* appear in two inscriptions in Horsley [f]. We have also *genio loci*, *provinciae* and *praetoris* [g], the genius of the Roman empire, and of particular places and officers of its dominion. But *Genio Terrae Britannicae* is peculiar to this place, and the only instance in which the *name of our island* is to be found in the many inscriptions preserved among us. Firmus, in the true spirit of his country, endeavours to make all the deities, both of his own and foreign nations propitious to him; and, after joining the rest together, not excepting Jupiter himself, consecrates one altar intirely to the genius of our isle.

THE lower part of a bust in armour, whether of a deity or soldier uncertain, found with these altars, is with them at Glasgow. Two smaller stones found at the same time, one inscribed to *Fortune*, the other centurial, are in private hands.

IN the station at Castlecary on the same wall, the labourers broke into a vault, where they found a considerable quantity of wheat laid under the floor; the colour black by time and damp, but the substance firm and undecayed. A curious question might here be raised, whether this corn was of British growth, or imported. The present state of agriculture in these parts would seem to determine against its home growth; though nothing but a comparison between the wheat of Italy and England could assist in the decision of this question.

[f] Northumberland, cxiii. Cumberland, xlii.

[g] Cumb. lxviii. Chesh. ii. Durh. xv.



